

Transportation News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State crews make preps for winter driving, Urge motorists to do the same

Equipment, drivers ready for snow fighting

CHICAGO—Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Secretary Timothy W. Martin and Illinois State Police Director Larry Trent today announced crews from around Illinois are making final preparations to get the state's frontline personnel and equipment ready for winter emergencies. They are also urging motorists to prepare themselves and their vehicles for winter driving, as Illinois enters the winter driving season.

"You can never be 100% prepared for what nature will throw at you, but our crews have been busy training and prepping equipment for several weeks, and we're ready," Secretary Martin said. "When you're dealing with winter weather, you have so many variables to contend with, but I am confident, as long as our equipment holds up, our plow teams will be able to face any test thrown at them."

IDOT has a clear pavement policy; meaning plow crews stay out until a storm has passed and the highways are all free of accumulation. During the 2005-2006 winter, more than 3300 IDOT employees and 2000 pieces of equipment will be utilized in keeping state routes clear and passable. Last year IDOT spent \$35.9 million dollars on snow removal efforts, that cost includes almost 387,000 tons of salt and 561,200 labor hours.

IDOT financial staff will closely monitor winter related expenses, but at no time will snow removal operations suffer because of financial considerations. Snow removal is a safety issue and a priority for the Department. While crews have cut back on mowing operations and have been asked to look at other ways to conserve fuel, snow removal is a priority and will not be scaled back to save money.

"Snow removal is expensive, but it can also be a matter of life and death, and I promise you now that fuel prices will not be a reason why plows are parked," Secretary Martin. "The only reason we will park plows during a storm, is if they're broken and we can't get them back on the road."

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A restructuring last year of IDOT's Division of Highways allows for more flexibility within the Department to address immediate needs. Last year, IDOT's southernmost district (D-9) was hit with a major storm, which saw accumulations within a couple of days the district normally would not see all year. Crews and equipment were brought in from the same region, but a different district (D-8), to assist in removal.

"The onset of winter provides new challenges to motorists and the Illinois State Police," said Director Larry Trent. "We ask that drivers be prepared to meet the challenge of the upcoming winter season in Illinois. Plan ahead, make sure everyone in the vehicle is properly restrained, drive defensively and make sure the vehicle is properly maintained to handle the effects of cold temperatures."

Other safety tips offered by the Illinois State Police for having a safe winter include:

- Make sure your vehicle is winterized—check the battery, antifreeze level, heater, defroster, windshield wipers and washer fluid level, etc.
- Always keep your gas tank at least two-thirds full to prevent the vehicle's fuel line from freezing.
- Dress warmly for the weather—dress in layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in anticipation of unexpected winter weather emergencies.
- Do not travel unless absolutely necessary—if you do have to make a trip, check the forecast and plan ahead with safety in mind.
- Make sure someone is aware of your travel route.
- Always carry an emergency car care kit that contains jumper cables, flares or reflectors, windshield washer fluid, a small ice scraper, traction material, blankets, non-perishable food and a first aid kit.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Always wear a safety belt

Motorists are urged to check travel conditions before any trip. You may get interstate condition information by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368) or on the internet at www.illinoisroads.info .

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Illinois Department of Transportation State of Illinois Winter of 2005-2006 Fact Sheet



Lane Mile



Plowed.....42,773
Counties Served.....102
Statewide



Personnel:

Number of Permanent Employee.....
.....1698

Number of Temporary



Employees.....1679
Number of Truck
Routes.....1118



Number and Type of Trucks:



Total Trucks.....1716

Special Equipment:

Graders.....88

Snowblowers.....7
Front End



Loaders.....247

Salt Usage (Shown in Tons):

Winter of 2000-2001	Winter of 2001-2002	Winter of of 2002-2003 2005	Winter of 2003-2004	Winter 2004-
590,000	296,000	488,000	422,000	386,646



Granular Salt Storage

Capacity.....421,473 Tons

Liquid Salt Storage Capacity..... 619,500
Gallons



Snow Removal Costs for the Winter of 2004-2005:

Labor	\$15,143,986
Material	\$12,928,852
Equipment	<u>\$7,906,772</u>
Total	\$35,979,612

Please Use Extreme Caution When Driving In Winter Conditions!!!

**For Road Conditions Contact The Illinois Department of
Transportation**

**Via the Internet @ www.dot.state.il.us OR
By Dialing 1-800-452-4368**